

## afterdeployment.org

Wellness resources for the military community.

### BRIEFING: RETURNING HOME

## **BRIEFING TOPICS**

 COMMON SOLDIER / FAMILY EXPERIENCES FOLLOWING REDEPLOYMENT.

SIGNS OF ADJUSTMENT PROBLEMS.

• ASSESSMENT PROGRAM (SWAPP).

RECOMMENDATIONS



## DEPLOYMENT / REDEPLOYMENT

#### **FACT**:

MOST SOLDIERS ARE AFFECTED BY THEIR DEPLOYMENT.

#### **MYTH:**

EVERY SOLDIER EXPERIENCES <u>CLINICALLY SIGNIFICANT</u> PROBLEMS OR SYMPTOMS AFTER DEPLOYING.

#### **FACT**:

MOST SOLDIER'S FAMILIES ARE AFFECTED BY A DEPLOYMENT.

#### MYTH:

EVERY SOLDIER'S FAMILY REPORTS ADJUSTMENT PROBLEMS REQUIRING PROFESSIONAL SERVICES.



## BACK HOME: COMMON SOLDIER THOUGHTS

- "I FEEL EMOTIONALLY LETDOWN."
- "NO ONE REALLY UNDERSTANDS WHAT I'VE BEEN THROUGH."
- "MY FRIENDS SEEM DIFFERENT."
- "OTHER PEOPLE'S CONCERNS SEEM PETTY NOW."
- "I FFFI LIKE A STRANGER AT HOME."
- "DID MY FAMILY MISS ME?"
- "SHOULD I TELL MY SPOUSE/FRIENDS ABOUT MY EXPERIENCES?"
- "HOW WILL MY CHILDREN RESPOND TO ME?"



## BACK HOME: COMMON FAMILY THOUGHTS

- "DID I HANDLE THINGS THE RIGHT WAY?"
- "WILL HE/SHE APPRECIATE HOW WELL I MANAGED THE FAMILY?"
- "I'VE GOTTEN GOOD AT SOME THINGS THAT I DON'T WANT TO GIVE UP."
- "SHOULD LASK HIM ABOUT HIS EXPERIENCES?"
- "HE SPENDS MORE TIME WITH HIS 'COMBAT BUDDIES' THAN WITH HIS FAMILY."
- "WHEN WILL HE/SHE BE MORE LIKE HIM/HERSELF?"
- WHEN WILL HE/SHE DEPLOY AGAIN?"



## WHAT IS NORMAL?

#### **SOLDIERS**

IT IS **COMMON** AND **NORMAL** FOR SOLDIERS TO EXPERIENCE EMOTIONAL AFTERSHOCKS WHEN THEY HAVE WITNESSED OR BEEN INVOLVED IN HIGHLY STRESSFUL AND LIFE THREATENING SITUATIONS.

#### **FAMILIES**

IT IS **COMMON** AND **NORMAL** FOR FAMILIES TO EXPERIENCE COPING DIFFICULTIES DURING THE PREDEPLOYMENT, DEPLOYMENT, AND REDEPLOYMENT PHASES OF ADJUSTMENT.

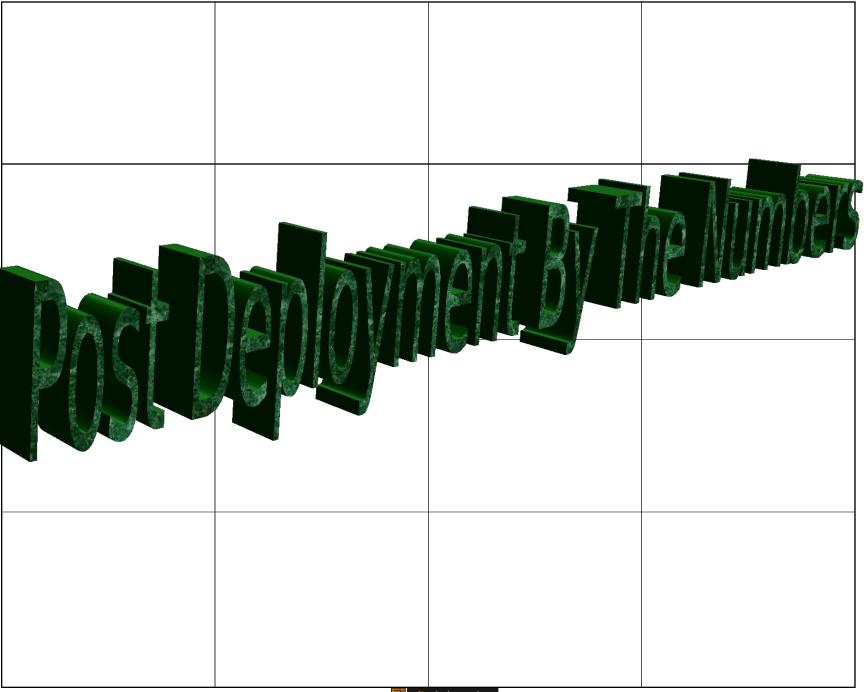


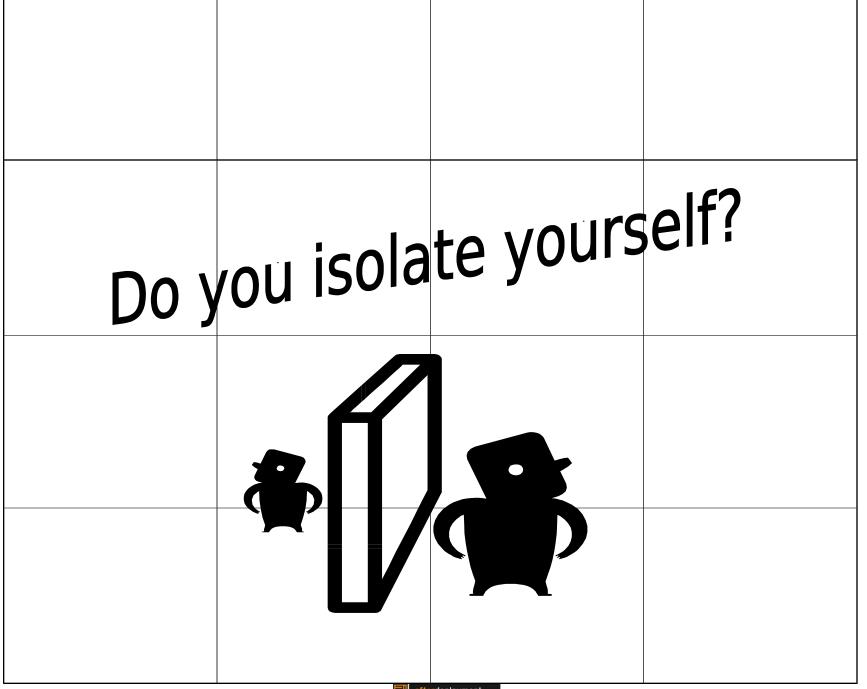
# THE "WHEN" OF POST DEPLOYMENT STRESS

SOMETIMES THE STRESS REACTIONS APPEAR IMMEDIATELY. SOMETIMES THEY APPEAR HOURS, DAYS, WEEKS, OR EVEN MONTHS LATER.

THE STRESS REACTIONS MAY
LAST A FEW DAYS, A FEW WEEKS, OR
EVEN A FEW MONTHS, AND SOMETIMES
LONGER.







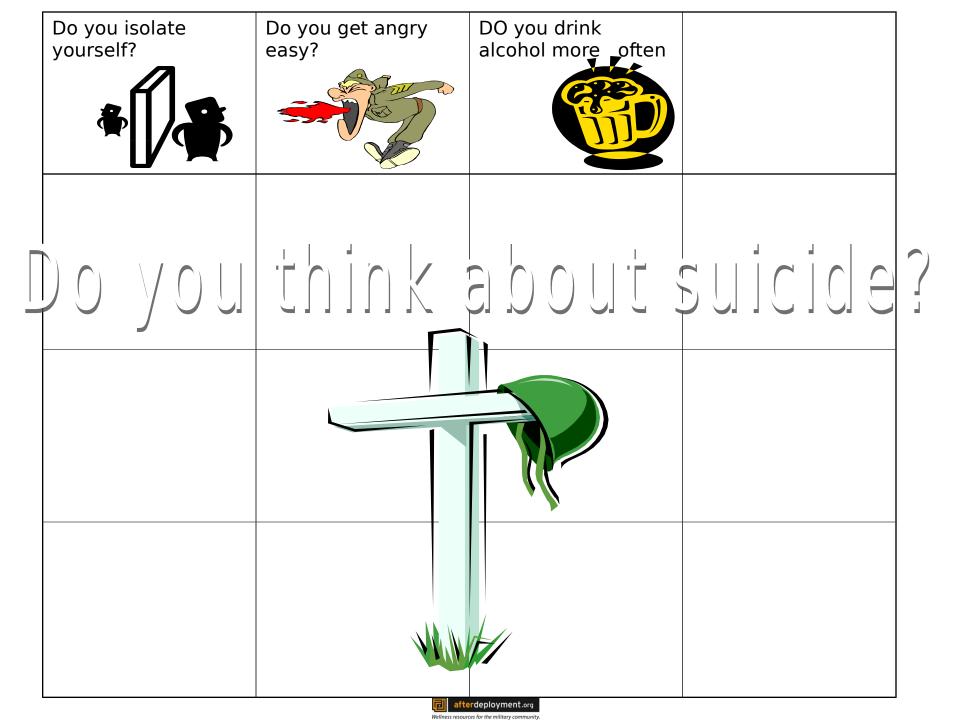
Do you isolate yourself?		



Do you isolate yourself?	Do you get angry easy?	



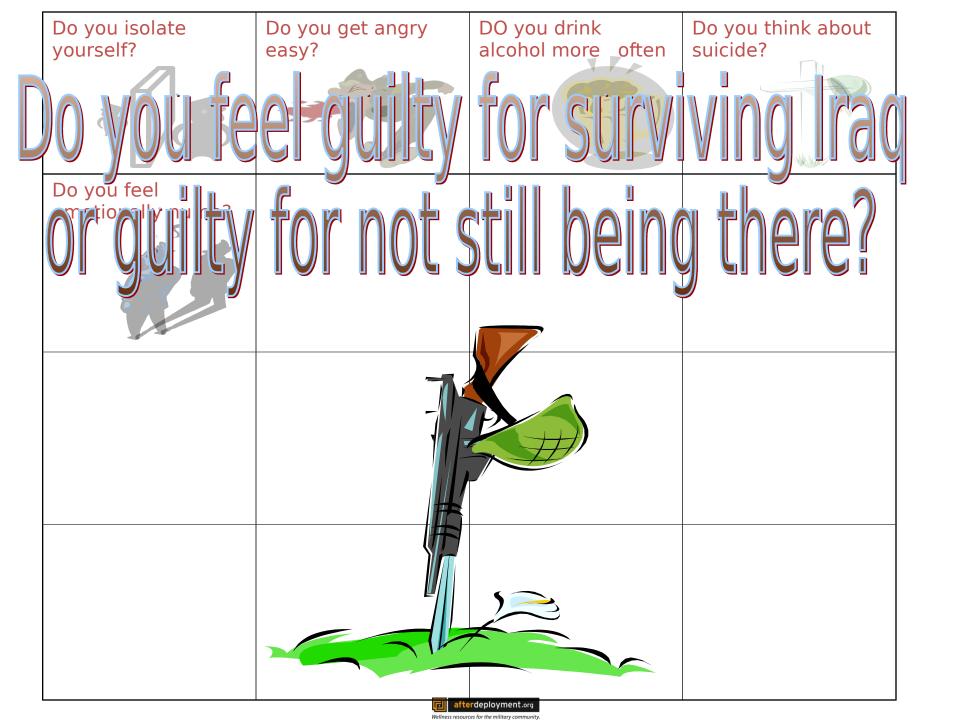
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Do you isolate yourself?	Do you get angry easy?	DO you drink alcohol more often	Do you think about suicide?



Do you isolate yourself?	Do you get angry easy?	DO you drink alcohol more often	Do you think about suicide?
Do you feel emotionally numb?			



Do you isolate yourself?	Do you get angry easy?	DO you drink alcohol more often	Do you think about suicide?
Do you feel emotionally numb?	Do you feel guilty for surviving Iraq, or guilty for not still being there?		

Do you isolate yourself?



Do you feel emotionally numb? Do you get angry easy?



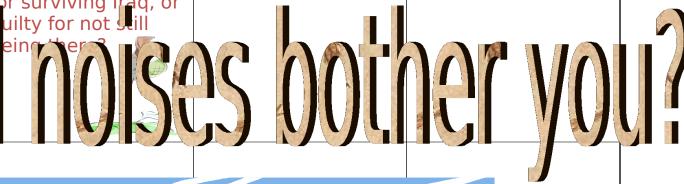
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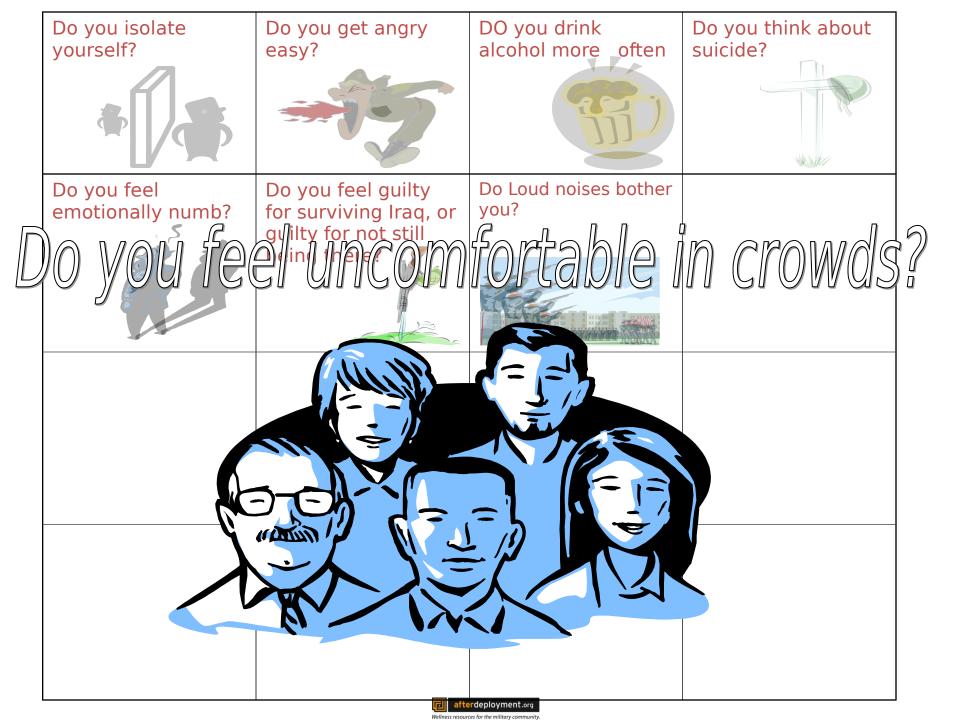
Do you think about suicide?



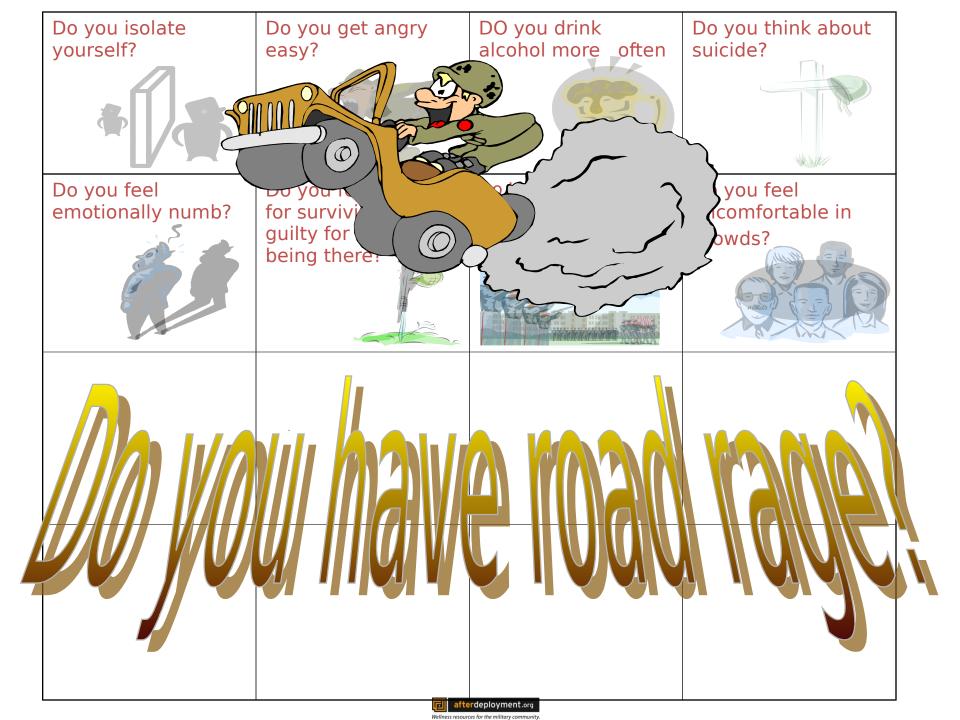




Do you isolate yourself?	Do you get angry easy?	DO you drink alcohol more often	Do you think about suicide?
Do you feel emotionally numb?	Do you feel guilty for surviving Iraq, or guilty for not still	Do Loud noises bother you?	
	being there?		



Do you isolate yourself?	Do you get angry easy?	DO you drink alcohol more often	Do you think about suicide?
Do you feel emotionally numb?	Do you feel guilty for surviving Iraq, or guilty for not still	Do Loud noises bother you?	Do you feel uncomfortable in Crowds?
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	guilty for not still being there?		Crowds?
	being there:		
Do you have Road Rage?			

Do you isolate yourself?

Do you feel

emotionally numb?

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Do Loud noises bother you?

Do you think about suicide?

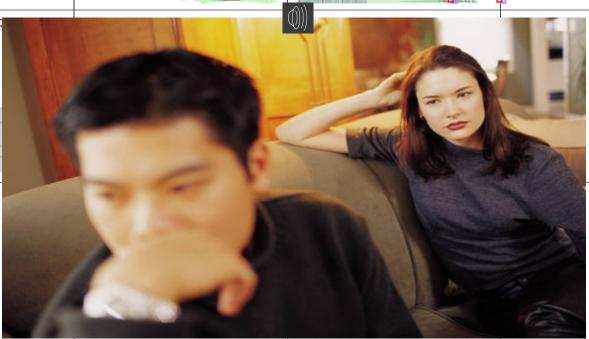


Do you feel uncomfortable in

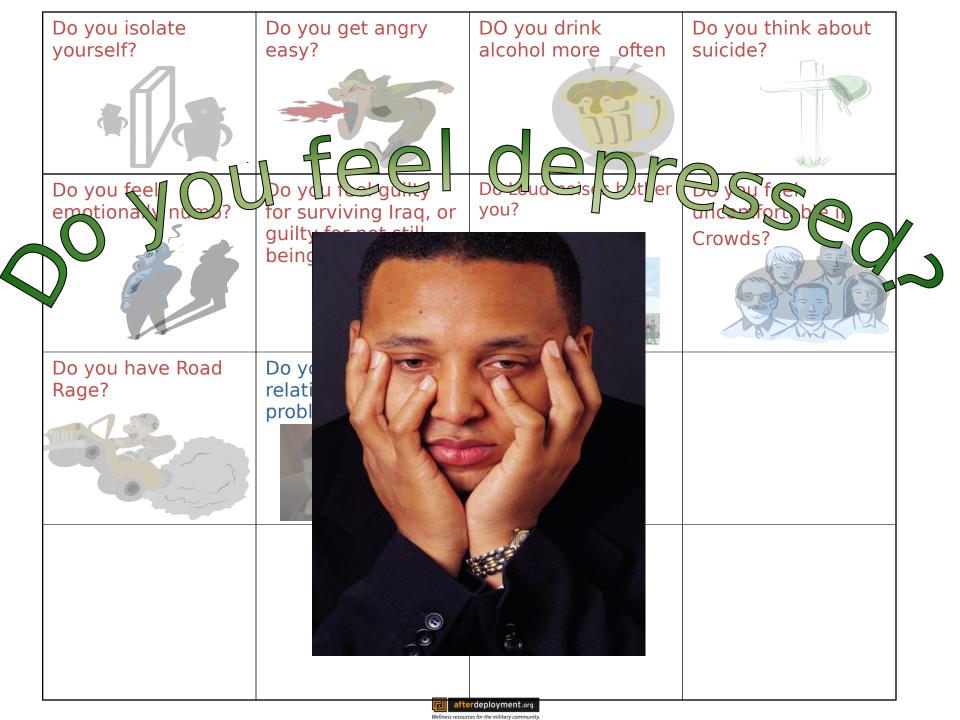
**Crowds**?

Do you have P Rage?



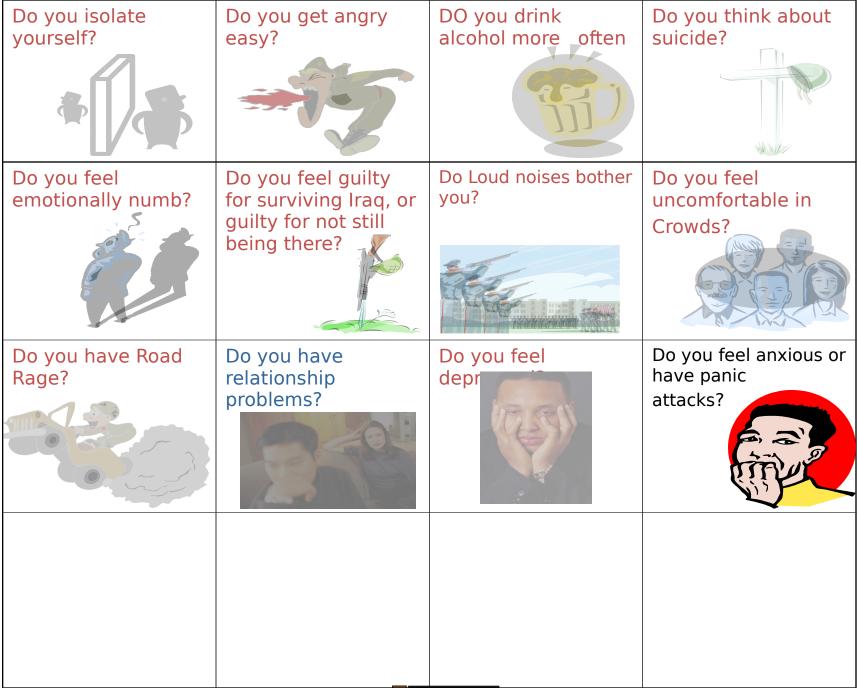


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Do you have Road Rage?	Do you have relationship problems?		



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	problems.		
		erdeployment.org	





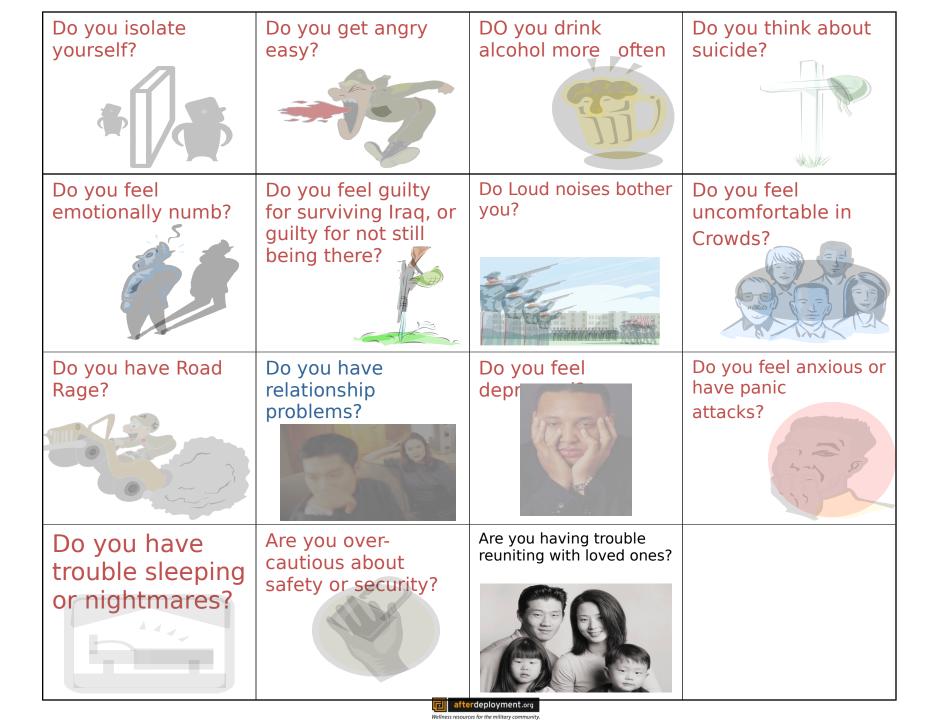


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Do you have Road Rage?	Do you have relationship problems?	Do you feel depr	Do you feel anxious or have panic attacks?
Do you have trouble sleeping			











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Do you have Road Rage?



Do you have relationship problems?



Do you feel depression



Do you feel anxious or have panic attacks?



Do you have trouble sleeping



Are you overcautious about safety or servity?

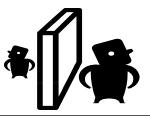


Are you having trouble reuniting with loved ones?



Are you avoiding people or interests you used tenjoy?

Do you isolate yourself?



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Do you think about suicide?

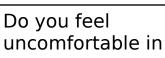


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### **NEGATIVE COPING**

### **EXCESSIVE BEHAVIORS:**

- ALCOHOL USE
- GAMBLING
- VIDEO GAMING
- FIXATION ON THE NEWS / WAR MOVIES
- OUT OF CONTROL SPENDING



### WHAT IS "ADAPTATION"?

- "ADAPT" means "To Adjust to New Conditions."
- Deploying / Redeploying Represents a Significant CHANGE in Life Conditions ("New Conditions").
- SUCCESS Depends on the ABILITY TO ADAPT to "New Conditions," that is:
  - the ABILITY TO ADAPT TO CHANGE.
- "The survivors in this life seem to be those who are **adaptable** to change."
  - Cambridge International Dictionary of English



## ADAPTIVE DEPLOYMENT BEHAVIOR

### WHAT'S ADAPTIVE IN ONE CONTEXT MAY <u>NOT</u> BE ADAPTIVE IN ANOTHER CONTEXT

- Being constantly on guard (hypervigilant).
- Getting little sleep.
- Recalling events repeatedly.
- Emotional numbing.
- Irritability.
- Heightened response to loud noises.

THESE BEHAVIORS MAXIMIZED SURVIVAL DURING DEPLOYMENT, BUT ARE DISRUPTIVE IN GARRISON



## WHEN IS THE PROBLEM 'MALADAPTIVE'

- IF IRRITABILITY/ANGER PERSISTS.
- IF YOU HAVE CONCERN THAT YOUR BEHAVIOR MAY BE AFFECTING THE SAFETY OF FAMILY MEMBERS.
- IF EXCESSIVE BEHAVIORS PERSIST.
- IF YOU HAVE THOUGHTS ABOUT SUICIDE.
- IF NIGHTMARES/INSOMNIA PERSISTS.
- IF MOOD REMAINS FLAT OR DEPRESSED OR CONSTANTLY ANXIOUS.



### PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

WHAT DID YOU LEARN ABOUT YOURSELF?

NAME A CONSTRUCTIVE CHANGE OR SKILL THAT YOU DEVELOPED THAT IS THE <u>RESULT</u> OF YOUR DEPLOYMENT.

- DO YOU HAVE:
  - A SENSE OF ACHIEVEMENT?
  - GREATER SELF-CONFIDENCE?
  - MORE SELF-ESTEEM?
  - IMPROVED DECISION-MAKING ABILITY?
  - INCREASED APPRECIATION OF FAMILY MEMBERS?



### IDENTIFIED NEEDS





# **Over 20%** of returning Service Members experience:

- □ Traumatic deployment memories
- ⇒ Sleep problems
- ⇒ Stress
- ⇒ Depression
- ⇒ Anger
- ⇒ Substance abuse
- ⇒ Relationship issues

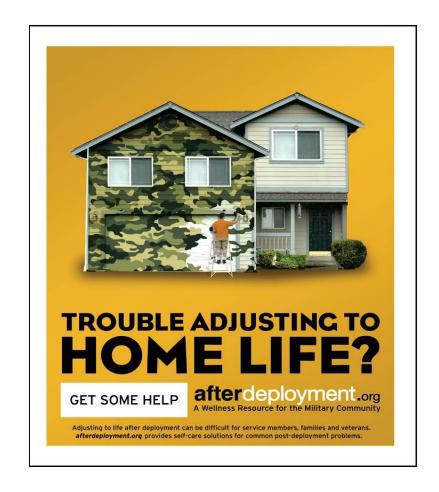


### BARRIERS TO CARE

While post-deployment adjustment problems are *normal*...

Service members do not seek face-to-face care because of personal and/or situational barriers...

...And the **stigma** associated with receiving care.





#### POST-DEPLOYMENT SURVEY

- POST DEPLOYMENT SURVEY ADMINISTERED TO ALL REDEPLOYING SOLDIERS.
- THE SURVEY TAPS A WIDE RANGE OF HEALTH-RELATED ISSUES.
- EVERY SOLDIER TAKES THE SURVEY.
- ON THE DAY OF THE SURVEY, <u>EVERY</u> SOLDIER HAS AN OPPORTUNITY TO TALK PRIVATELY WITH A CHAPLAIN, A SOCIAL WORKER, OR A PSYCHOLOGIST.



### SUGGESTIONS - 1

- Go Slowly Don't Try to Make up for Lost Time All At Once.
- Concentrate on Family / Friendships.
- Recognize That Closeness May be Awkward at Times.
- Get Rest.
- Learn to Really Relax.



### SUGGESTIONS - 2

- Consider the Following:
  - What's Different About You?
  - What are Others Telling You is Different?
  - Do You Continue to Have a Lot of Mission Adrenaline?
  - Are You Having Problems With Garrison Life?
  - Are You on Edge a Lot, Irritable, Short-Tempered?
  - What's Different About Your Family?



### SUGGESTIONS - 3

- Families Want to Know if It's O.K. to Ask You About Your Deployment Give a Clear Response.
- Curb Your Need to Take Control.
- Avoid Making Sudden Big Life Changes.
- Identify the Positive.
- Reassure Your Children Change Often Frightens Them.
- Try to See Things From His/Her Point of View.
- Have Confidence that Things Will Return to Normalcy in a Few Months.
- Talk About Your Experiences Talk is the Most Healing Medicine.



### RESOURCES

- UNIT CHAIN OF COMMAND
- UNIT CHAPLAIN
- SOCIAL WORK SERVICES/CARE MANAGERS
- BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CLINIC
- SOLDIER READINESS SERVICE
- MEDICAL PROVIDERS
- afterdeployment.org
- MILITARYONESOURCE

